



NLG NEWSLETTER

Official Publication of the Numismatic Literary Guild Inc.

Volume 34, No. 2

Autumn 2003

A BASH TO REMEMBER; BILL FIVAZ WINS CLEMY

By Ed Reiter

The Numismatic Literary Guild turns 35 this year – and while there isn't any birthday party planned, the Baltimore Bash served that purpose nicely for the more than 100 members and guests in attendance.

As usual, the Bash provided a mixture of good, clean fun and well-deserved awards, along with a generous helping of hot roast beef and other culinary treats – a welcome added touch made possible in recent years by financial support from friends of the Guild.

Wendell Wolka, the NLG's answer to Bob Hope, served again as master of ceremonies and kept the proceedings moving at an amiable clip.

Wolka's opening monologue was peppered with zesty zingers aimed at such perennial targets of opportunity as the U.S. Mint and the American Numismatic Association – with particular attention to the ANA's widely unpopular new logo, which recently displaced the Lamp of Knowledge.

By the end of the evening, there was little doubt in anyone's mind where the NLG stood on

this contentious subject – though the ANA's new executive director, Chris Cipolletti, the prime mover behind the new logo, looked on gamely with a smile on his face throughout the frontal assault.

The centerpiece of this assault was a skit starring Bill Fivaz as Osama bin Laden, Wolka as Saddam Hussein and Mike Ellis as Saddam's nephew. They took the audience behind the scenes at the Aunt Fatima Oil Lamp Co., a make-believe enterprise which has been plunged into confusion by the appearance of the new logo. (Not coincidentally, the new logo's prominent use of a crescent has suggested it might be construed as Middle Eastern.)

David Alexander provided a rapid-fire update on current events, as viewed through the prism of NLG "fair comment," devoting part of his report to the new logo, whose omnipresence at the Baltimore Convention Center proved irresistible for the Guild's seasoned satirists.

Musical selections were offered by yours truly and the seemingly unsinkable Greg Heim – though the latter appeared to cut short his number when emcee Wolka signaled time was up.

Cont. on page 4

**Michael Sedgwick
'Takes' NLG Newsletter
Editor's Chair**

It is my privilege to take the Editor's chair ... well, I'm not going to actually *take* it anywhere, but at least it's a job I can sit down at!!! To be honest, I see myself more as an "assembler" of items, than as a real editor ... as always, I suspect our worthy friend Ed Reiter will have a few things to say about commas, quotation marks and italics, etc., etc.

But kudos to Tom DeLorey ... and many thanks for his efforts. Tom certainly made it clear that the success of the *NLG Newsletter* is dependent on receiving contributions from our members. And this is the whole point ... the *Newsletter* is really as good as we make it! Bearing in mind that any articles, features and comments are those of NLG members, it becomes – pretty logically – a self-fulfilling medium.

I know many of you from my work representing the British Royal Mint for public relations and media contact. It has been a source of great personal pleasure to be a part of the hobby of coin collecting and come to know so many great and talented people.

Cont. on page 2

I have marveled at the vast opportunities here in North America for numismatic writings: Weekly publications of over 100 pages; monthly high-quality magazines on the newsstands and by subscription; coin clubs in every corner of the 50 states; an association in the ANA that leads the world as a member-driven numismatic organization. And of course, these days, the Internet. Our NLG brings all of us together

All the more reason, therefore, to crave some meaningful crumbs of contribution to our own NLG mouthpiece. NLG members represent a truly diverse group of numismatic writers (pardon that generalization) with a significant international flavor. Most of us are not short on something to say... just on the time in which to say it!

It has long been my view that we should be able to offer members something more than a convention Bash and a couple of newsletters a year. Now it is my hope that we can deliver an increasingly frequent – dare I say regular – *Newsletter*, which can serve to join us together as a group and enable us to share thoughts, concerns, pleasures – even humor!

Having been involved with the production of the *Newsletter* for several years now, I look forward to playing some small part in its future. As the mouthpiece of a great organization, it deserves good things from all of us, and certainly as many as are able. "Here's looking at You!!!

#



Ed Rochette Doubly Honored

Edward C. Rochette (center), executive director emeritus of the American Numismatic Association, receives the Burnett Anderson Memorial Award for Excellence in Numismatic Writing. Seen here are Lee (left) and Mark Anderson at the ANA Banquet conferring the award bearing their father's name. Rochette, who was repeatedly lauded at the ANA Convention in Baltimore, was also presented with the ANA's Numismatist of the Year Award. (Photo courtesy Krause Publications, Inc.)

NLG NEWSLETTER

Since 1968, the official publication of the Numismatic Literary Guild Ltd.

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New Judging Yields Winning Results By Scott A. Travers

In an effort to bring even greater prestige and professionalism to the NLG Writers' Competition, we asked two top publishing executives from outside the hobby to serve on our panel of judges and assist in the selection process. One was Dorothy Harris, director of antiques and collectibles for the Crown Publishing Group division of Random House Inc., publishing unit of German-based Bertelsmann, A.G., the world's largest entertainment conglomerate. The other was Timothy J. Kochuba, former vice president and general manager of the Ballantine Publishing Group.

Harris and Kochuba were given judging assignments that took maximum advantage of their expertise in book and catalog

publishing. Both have been involved with books on coins and related topics – so, although neither is a coin collector, both are familiar with the hobby.

Still, to ensure that numismatic merit would receive sufficient weight, these categories – and all others – were judged as well by respected authorities from within the hobby, including John Iddings, R.W. Julian, Maurice Rosen and Margo Russell. Thomas K. DeLorey, who tabulated the results for some of the categories, also served as a judge. And I coordinated and oversaw the process.

I am greatly satisfied with the results of this year's judging and am pleased to have received so many favorable comments.

By involving top experts from the outside, we brought a whole new perspective to the process. Dottie Harris and Tim Kochuba

were thorough, meticulous judges who took this job very seriously and came up with excellent choices.

We are planning to use a similar approach in 2004.

In addition to serving as a judge, Dorothy Harris was the featured speaker at the NLG symposium, where she gave Guild members a behind-the-scenes look at book publishing. Harris has worked with a number of numismatic book authors, including David L. Ganz, Alan Herbert, Marc Hudgeons and me, as well as on book projects of the Professional Coin Grading Service.

She and Kochuba both attended the Baltimore Bash, where they took part in the presentation of award plaques, along with other judges.

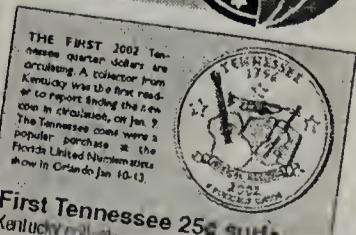
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If you write... write to Coin World!

We're always interested in good features, on U.S. coins and other numismatic collectibles.



January 28, 2002
Specialists warn that paper items may discolor, embrittle
to the heat generated by the high levels of radiation
needed to kill anthrax spores.
The dose of radiation necessary to kill anthrax spores is very high, way beyond a lethal dose for humans. That's why the irradiation is an automated procedure done in a sealed room. It's the heat generated during the process that changes the molecular structure of the objects being irradiated. Paper items can even affect the dye used in printing the items.
Meltby, in her column in this week's issue of *Coin World*, writes: "Organic materials, such as paper, are particularly concerned because radiation can even affect the dye used in printing the items. Paper money and other items made of organic materials are particularly concerned because radiation can even affect the dye used in printing the items."



It's easy, just...

Summarize your feature ideas. Keep in mind our features are 1,200 to 1,500 words. Let us know if you have photos or art available and

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Beth Deisher, Editor; P.O. Box 150;
Sidney, OH 45365-0150, FAX: 888-304-8388
bdeisher@coinworld.com

(published weekly - ave. 110 pgs.)

Coinage redesign was the subject of my parody this year, just as it was the last time the convention (and the Bash) took place in Baltimore 10 years ago. The two-in-one parody appears on page 11 of the *Newsletter*.

Anthony Swiatek and Scott Travers reprised their usual roles as Karnak the Magnificent and his assistant, amazing the audience with answers to questions sealed – hermetically, of course – in special envelopes. Among this year's answers: "The Lamp of Knowledge." The question: "What went out when Chris Cipolletti forgot to pay the ANA's utility bill?"

At the conclusion of the evening's entertainment, Wolka turned over the podium to Travers, who coordinates the NLG Writers' Competition, for presentation of awards to this year's winners. (A complete list of winners can be found on pages 6 and 7 in this *Newsletter*.)

First, however, Travers was summoned to the front of the room for a surprise award of his own: Outgoing ANA President John Wilson singled him out for a President's Award, citing him for his many years of service to the national coin club – and the hobby as a whole – as a writer, lecturer, consumer advocate and member of the ANA Board of Governors. Travers served four years on the Board, including two as vice president.

Travers later handed out the biggest award of all when he announced his selection of Bill Fivaz as the 2003 recipient of the Clemy, the Guild's most coveted honor. He noted that Fivaz provided guidance and inspiration to him when he was a young collector and just starting out as an



Top NLG Honor to Bill Fivaz

The Clemy, top award of the Numismatic Literary Guild, was presented to Bill Fivaz July 31 at the NLG Bash in Baltimore by Scott Travers, last year's recipient. Travers paid tribute to the man who he said was both inspirational and helpful when he was a Young Numismatist and beginning author. He said some of the photos Fivaz did for him almost 20 years ago are still in his books. Fivaz has also served on the NLG board and the American Numismatic Association board of governors. (Photo courtesy Krause Publications, Inc.)

author, and said that assistance has continued through the years.

Fivaz has served as a Board member of both the NLG and the ANA, and also has received the Farran Zerbe Award, the ANA's highest honor. He will get to select next year's Clemy recipient. Travers was the winner a year ago.

By the end of the night, most of this year's Bash-goers had smiles on their faces and full bellies – and many of them also left with award plaques under their arms.

We'll do it all over again next year in Pittsburgh.

#

NLG Web Site

By Howard M. Berlin
NLG Webmaster

If you are not already aware of it, the NLG joined the Internet age almost three years ago. Officially, the site's Internet address (i.e., domain name) is www.numismatic-literaryguild.org.

As Webmaster, I've been asked several questions concerning the site's operation.

One question was, "Why the long name instead of the shorter, easier-to-type www.NLG.org?" Unfortunately, that domain name was already taken by the National Lawyers Guild. Several shorter names were suggested, but the NLG Board decided on the long version – no one could now confuse us with anyone else!

Once you find us, simply use your browser to bookmark the page so you won't have type in all those letters.

Another question was about its cost. Other than a nominal yearly registration fee of about \$30 for the NLG to keep the rights to the domain name, the site costs the NLG nothing. I do all the work. It is free of ads (banner and pop-up) and it does not use cookies. Although it is not an "https" secure site, it is well-administered and protected in terms of security and it has not been hit by hackers. I can't imagine why anyone would want to, anyway.

My aim is to keep things simple; there are no fancy doodads requiring fancy browser plug-ins for shockwave, java, audio or video clips. It's pretty much browser-independent. The

majority of the site's visitors are using Microsoft's Internet Explorer (59%), followed in order by Netscape (27%), Mozilla (2%) and about a dozen others to a much lesser degree.

In the almost three years of operation, the "home page" has quietly received over 3,500 hits with over 26,000 requests covering all of its other pages. Obviously, this is small potatoes compared with high-traffic sites like Amazon.com or eBay. But then, the NLG is not selling items or auctioning off coins.

Some other stats of interest:

(1) User operating system: Windows (71%, all versions); Macintosh (3%); Unix (0.4%).

(2) People find us via: Google (23%), Coin World (10%), my own

Web site (6%), Yahoo (5%), ANA (4%).

(3) Visitors to our site from outside the U.S.A. represent 38 countries. Our site also has not escaped the notice of those in the U.S. military and government. No, I can't tell specifically if the FBI or CIA has been poking around.

(4) Our busiest day of the week: Wednesday (16% of all hits), followed by Monday.

(5) Our least busy day of the week: Sunday (12%).

(6) Our busiest month: May 2003 – probably for the NLG Writers' Competition rules.

(7) The most popular pages (in decreasing order): publications, contest rules, Web links, membership.

Cont. on page 11

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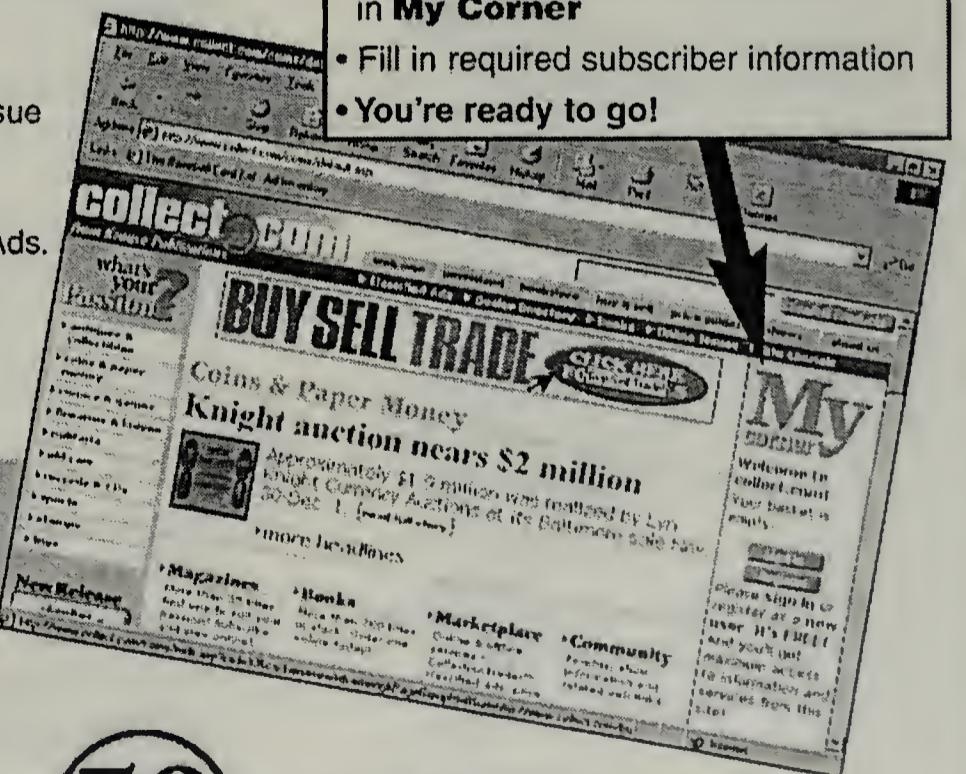
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2003 NLG Awards

Following is a complete list of winners in the 2003 Numismatic Literary Guild Writers' Competition. Congratulations to one and all!

CLASS I BOOKS

1. BOOK OF THE YEAR

The work having the greatest potential impact on numismatics:

"100 Greatest U.S. Coins,"
Jeff Garrett and Ron Guth

2. BEST SPECIALIZED BOOK

- (a) United States Coins: "The New York Times Guide to Coin Collecting," Ed Reiter
- (b) World Coins: "Nicaragua - Its Coins, Paper Money, Medals, Tokens," Luis Humberto Flores
- (c) U.S. Paper Money: "American History as Seen Through Currency," Dr. Edward A. Dauer and Joanne C. Dauer
- (d) World Paper Money: "Standard Catalog of World Paper Money, 9th Edition," edited by Neil Shafer and George S. Cuhaj
- (f) Numismatic Investments: "United States Proof Sets and Mint Sets (1936-2002)," Ron Guth and Bill Gale

EXTRAORDINARY MERIT

"Coin Collecting: Boy Scouts of America Merit Badge Series," George Cuhaj

CLASS II-A U.S. COMMERCIAL NUMISMATIC MAGAZINES

- 3. BEST ARTICLE OR SERIES OF ARTICLES
 - (a) Coins: "American Drummer Boy," William E. Hagans, *Coins Magazine*
 - (b) Tokens & Medals: "Medal of Honor," Jon Blackwell, *COINage*
 - (c) Paper Money: "Fractional Currency," R.W. Julian, *COINage*
- 4. BEST COLUMN
 - "My Two Cents' Worth," Ed Reiter, *COINage*
- 5. BEST ISSUE
 - COINage*, October 2002, Jeffrey R. Shoop, Publisher

CLASS II-B WORLD COMMERCIAL NUMISMATIC MAGAZINES

- 6. BEST ARTICLE OR SERIES OF ARTICLES
 - (a) Coins: "Lutine Treasure a Thorn in Side of Lloyd's," Thomas H. Sebring, *World Coin News*
 - (b) Tokens & Medals: "Notgeld Coins May Be Sleeper Collectible," Richard Giedroyc, *World Coin News*
 - (c) Paper Money: "Lyn Knight Action Interests Costa Ricans," Paul M. Green, *World Coin News*
- 7. BEST COLUMN
 - "From A to Z," Bob Reis, *World Coin News*
- 8. BEST ISSUE
 - World Coin News*, July 2002, David C. Harper, Editor

CLASS III NON-PROFIT OR CLUB NUMISMATIC MAGAZINES

- 9. BEST ARTICLE
 - "Selling America's Rarest Coin: The 1933 Double Eagle," David T. Alexander, *The Numismatist*
- 10. BEST COLUMN
 - "Current Cabinet Activities," Robert W. Hoge, *ANS Magazine*
- 11. BEST ISSUE - TIE
 - The Numismatist*, March 2003, Barbara Gregory, Editor
 - ANS Journal*, Summer 2002, Ute Wartenberg Kagan, Editor
- 12. BEST SPOT NEWS STORY OR CONTINUING COVERAGE OF DEVELOPING STORY IN NUMISMATICS
 - "'33 \$20 Blasts Record," David L. Ganz, *Numismatic News*
- 13. BEST ARTICLE OR SERIES OF ARTICLES
 - (a) Coins: "'Sole' 1933 Double Eagle Likely Not Alone," R.W. Julian, *Numismatic News*
 - (b) Tokens & Medals: "1789 Mott Token Likely From 1830s," Russell Rulau, *Numismatic News*
 - (c) Paper Money: "Notes Help Chronicle Bank Looter's Career," Tom Conklin, *Bank Note Reporter*
- 14. BEST COLUMN
 - "Notes From Washington," Peter Huntoon, *Bank Note Reporter*
- 15. BEST ISSUE
 - Numismatic News*, October 13, 2002, David C. Harper, Editor

**CLASS V
NON-NUMISMATIC
PERIODICALS**

17. BEST ARTICLE

"The Ancient Art of Making Money," Michael Sedgwick, *British Heritage*

**CLASS VI
COMPUTER SOFTWARE
AND INTERNET WEB SITES**

18. BEST WEB SITE ARTICLE

"The Intelligent Collector: Why Do We Collect Things?," James Halperin, www.HeritageCoin.com,

19. BEST DEALER WEB SITE

Heritage Rare Coins, www.HeritageCoin.com, James Halperin, Brian Shipman and Shane Reed, Co-Authors

**20. BEST NON-COMMERCIAL
WEB SITE**

American Numismatic Association, www.money.org, Barbara Gregory, Editor

21. BEST TRADE PRESS WEB SITE

Coin World, www.CoinWorld.com, Beth Deisher, Editor

23. BEST SOFTWARE

"Brother Can You Spare a Dime," Roger deWardt Lane

**CLASS VII
AUCTION CATALOGS**

24. BEST AUCTION CATALOG

(a) "The Sid and Alicia Belzberg Collection of Canadian Coinage," Heritage Numismatic Auctions

EXTRAORDINARY MERIT

- "The Queller Family Collection of U.S. Half Dollars," Stack's

**CLASS VIII
COMMERCIAL
PUBLICATIONS**

**25. LEE MARTIN FOUNDER'S AWARD
for Best Investment**

Newsletter

**Maurice H. Rosen, *The Rosen
Numismatic Advisory***

**26. BEST DEALER-PUBLISHED
MAGAZINE OR NEWSPAPER**

***Rare Coin Review*,
Q. David Bowers**

**CLASS IX
ALL-AROUND PORTFOLIO**

27. Ron Guth

**CLASS X
BEST WRITER
NLG NEWSLETTER**

28. David W. Lange

**33. CLEMENT F. BAILEY
MEMORIAL AWARD**

Rita Laws, Ph.D

THE CLEMY AWARD

Bill Fivaz

**ROLL OF HONOR
CLEMY AWARD WINNERS
1968 - 2003**



1968	Clement F. Bailey
1969	Edward C. Rochette
1970	Lee Martin
1971	Margo Russell
1972	Virginia Culver
1973	Maurice M. Gould
1974	Eva B. Adams
1975	Ray Byrne
1976	Chester L. Krause
1977	Richard S. Yeoman
1978	Lee F. Hewitt
1979	Abe Kosoff
1980	Glenn Smedley
1981	Arlie Slabaugh
1982	Eric P. Newman
1983	Kenneth Bressett
1984	Donn Pearlman
1985	Walter Breen
1986	Ed Reiter
1987	David Alexander
1988	James L. Miller
1989	Q. David Bowers
1990	David L. Ganz
1991	Clifford Mishler
1992	R.W. Julian
1993	Russell Rulau
1994	Elvira Clain-Stefanelli
1995	Beth Deisher
1996	Col. Bill Murray
1997	Alan Herbert
1998	Burnett Anderson
1999	Thomas K. DeLorey
2000	Wendell Wolka
2001	David C. Harper
2002	Scott A. Travers
2003	Bill Fivaz

From the Director's Desk

By Ed Reiter

The NLG has reached and passed another milestone: The Baltimore Bash marked our 35th anniversary – and as the fine attendance and high spirits on that occasion made clear, we're still going strong. Much of the credit for this goes to our excellent group of directors and appointed officers.

Scott Travers continues to do a remarkable job of coordinating our annual Writers' Competition. Once again, Scott had all the award plaques ready for presentation at the Bash – no mean logistical feat, considering the number of awards and how little time there is to get everything done.

Kay Lenker, our treasurer, didn't get to deliver her annual financial report the night of the Bash, but she assures me the message would have been a familiar one: "We're in the black." Kay herself deserves no small part of the credit for this, for she is an indefatigable dues-collector and fiscal watchdog.

Our financial picture also has been brightened considerably by the generosity of friends in the dealer community. Heritage Rare Coin Galleries sponsored the reception at this year's Bash, and Intercept Shield sponsored the award plaques. In addition, Heritage has provided financial sponsorship for well over a dozen new NLG members during the last year.

Tom DeLorey rendered yeoman service as editor of the NLG Newsletter in the last 12 months. As of this issue, the headaches have been passed to a new editor

– Michael Sedgwick, who is familiar to many of you as the longtime U.S. publicist for the British Royal Mint. Michael and his talented wife Diana have been closely involved for years with the composition, printing and distribution of the *Newsletter* – so this new hat should fit nicely.

David Ganz, our legal counsel, has been an invaluable resource. In recent months, David played a pivotal role in obtaining liability insurance for our officers and directors. Scott Travers worked closely with David on this crucial project.

Howard Berlin has helped shepherd us into the Computer Age as Web master of our increasingly popular Internet site on the World Wide Web. Howard keeps the site lively and timely – and he, like Michael Sedgwick, would welcome news, features and photographs from the membership.

Wendell Wolka is not an appointed official of the Guild, but he has come to be synonymous with the Bash, and it would be hard to imagine that rollicking evening of dead-on zingers and would-be singers without this uproarious host and his band of shills.

Last but certainly not least, I want to recognize the five current members of the NLG Board of Directors: David T. Alexander, David C. Harper and R.W. "Bob" Julian, Kari Stone and Wendell Wolka. All five have been constant sources of wisdom and guidance.

As you can see, the Guild is doing just fine as it enters its 36th year. With your support, I see nothing but more smooth sailing in the months and years ahead!

#

ELECTION TIME

Three seats on the NLG Board of Directors are up for grabs this year. Those chosen will serve on the board for two years.

The seats are currently held by David T. Alexander, David C. Harper and R.W. Julian. All are eligible for re-election, and all have expressed a willingness to continue serving.

Under NLG bylaws, a member may serve on the board for two consecutive two-year terms. All three members whose terms expire this year were newly elected in 2001.

In accordance with established procedure, the names of these three members will appear on the election ballot, along with those of any others wishing to declare as candidates.

If no one else decides to run, the executive director will cast a single ballot re-electing the three incumbents. If there is a contest, a ballot will be sent to the entire membership.

To appear on the ballot, a potential candidate must be a member in good standing and submit nominations from three (3) other members in good standing. These should be sent to Ed Reiter, Executive Director, 12 Abbington Ter., Glen Rock, N.J. 07452. All such nominations must be received no later than Oct. 10.

There are five members on the Board of Directors. The three who are elected this year will join two holdovers, Kari Stone and Wendell Wolka. Board members vote on NLG policies and appointments, and participate each year in the selection of candidates for the Clemy, the Guild's highest award.

Awards Time!



Congratulations to All!

A. Timothy J. Kochuba, former vice president of Ballantine Books, and Dorothy Harris, Random House's director of antiques and collectibles, preside over the awards portion of the NLG Bash. Kochuba and Harris played an important role in helping to judge this year's competition.

B. Maurice H. Rosen (left), publisher of the *Rosen Numismatic Advisory*, receives the Lee Martin Award for "Best Investment Newsletter" from presenter Wendell Wolka

C. Beth Deisher editor of *Coin World*, receives the award for "Best Trade Press Web Site" from presenter Wendell Wolka.

D. Anthony Swiatek (foreground), relaxing after his perennially popular Karnak routine as he enjoyed the awards presentations. Among his table companions, from left: Bob Leonard, David T. Alexander and Tom DeLorey.

E. Wendell Wolka presents awards for Best Issue of a Non-Profit or Club Numismatic Magazine to two of the hobby's leading ladies, Ute Wartenberg Kagan (left) of the American Numismatic Society and Barbara Gregory of the American Numismatic Association. Their publications, *ANS Magazine* and *Numismatist*, tied for the honor.

F. R.W. Julian (left), receives a writing award from Wendell Wolka. Julian was honored for articles that appeared in *COINage* and *Numismatic News*.

ATTENTION NUMISMATIC WRITERS

Heritage Numismatic Auctions is pleased to announce a program for Numismatic Literary Guild members and all other numismatic writers, for articles to appear on the world's leading numismatic website: HeritageCoin.com.

Rules & Instructions:

- Writers may submit an unlimited number of articles electronically (by e-mail or on disk, including all illustrations; MS Word preferred).
- Articles selected will be posted on the Heritage website: HeritageCoin.com.
- Articles can be fresh or previously published, but the writer must be able to grant Heritage permission to post the article.
- The writer must have permission to reproduce any illustrations, and those illustrations must also be submitted in electronic form.
- Articles may pertain to any topic related to numismatics. Research may be from primary or secondary sources.
- The most popular article will be determined by readership statistics and ratings by HeritageCoin.com members.
- Any entrants may also request that their email addresses and web site links be added to their bios (we reserve the right to remove links we feel are inappropriate for any reason). Coin dealers who submit articles may also request a link on our Links page.

There is no payment for the articles, except that the first 25 submitters whose articles we accept will receive free Numismatic Literary Guild membership for one year (new members subject to NLG Board approval).

Entries should be submitted to the attention of James L. Halperin (Jim@HeritageCoin.com), and may be e-mailed, or mailed on computer disc c/o Heritage, 100 Highland Park Village, 2nd Floor, Dallas, Texas 75205.



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ACHIEVING PARODY

By ED REITER



A MUSICAL CHANGE OF HEART

Ten years ago, the last time the ANA convened in Baltimore, I used my annual number at the NLG Bash to make a musical plea for redesign of regular U.S coins.

What a difference a decade makes.

By this year's Bash at the Baltimore Convention Center, I'd seen enough dreary state quarters – and enough previews of the deadly dull "handshake" Jefferson nickel – to realize the U.S. Mint simply can't be entrusted in this day and age with a mission as important as coinage redesign.

At his worst, Charles Barber never concocted anything as confusing as the Mississippi quarter, with its Rohrschach-blot magnolia blossoms ... as childish as the Alabama quarter, which converts Helen Keller into Whistler's mother ... or as stupid as the Illinois quarter, which encases Abraham Lincoln in an outline map of the state.

As for the upcoming Lewis and Clark nickel, which is scheduled to reprise the lifeless clasped hands from the Indian peace medal, I'd much rather kiss it off than shake its hand.

In 1993, I sang my call for redesign to the tune of that old

Teresa Brewer favorite "Music, Music, Music." This year, for purposes of symmetry as well as parody, I chose the same music.

Before singing this year's revised lyrics, I took Bash-goers 10 years back and sang my original plea.

Here's the way that went

PUT ANOTHER NICKEL IN

*Put another nickel in;
Jeffersons are old as sin.
Notify the next of kin:
They're losers, losers, losers.*

*Don't forget the quarter, too;
Wishy Washington, adieu!
Send that bird to Frank Perdue:
You're losers, losers, losers.*

*Boring ...
You've got me snoring.
They may put something just as
dorky in,
Still, I want Jack Kevorkian*

To

*Drown the dime the next high tide,
Slip the cent some cyanide.
Make it look like suicide.
They're boring, boring, boring.*

As the old saying goes, be careful what you wish for – you may get your wish. All of this has given me a new perspective on coinage redesign.

Which brings me to this year's revised lyrics:

*Looks as though I got my wish,
But a handshake's not my dish.
Art-wise, it's gefilte fish.
It's putrid, putrid, putrid.
Take away those quarters, too;
They're a fetid witches' brew.
Who designed them? Scooby Doo?
They're putrid, putrid, putrid.*

*Awful.
Make it unlawful
For Uncle Sam to take a dull design
And substitute a Frankenstein.*

*So
Please don't touch the cent and dime,
Though I know they're past their
prime.
I can do without more slime
That's putrid, putrid, putrid.*

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The NLG Web site, along with the Newsletter, is intended for the dissemination of information about NLG. Suggestions, corrections and information about members' new books are always welcome. Feel free to contact me at: webmaster@numismaticliteraryguild.org.

NLG NEWSLETTER

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